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AUTHOR McGill-Franzen, Anne
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the recent policy history of reading education, its place on the public policy agenda, and the research that relates reading policy to reading instruction. Part I of the paper provides a brief recent history of federal education policy, which aims to ensure equity. Part II revisits compensatory education and describes systemic reform, the theoretical underpinning of current state education policy. It also reviews effects of the so-called second wave of policy that deals with the harder issues of implementation and capacity building. Part III emphasizes the research on implementation in Michigan--it reviews the relation between school restructuring and reading instruction and describes research on the non-monolithic character of policy responses by teachers and administrators. Part IV discusses the demise of constructivist reading policy in California. Part V suggests an agenda-setting process that culminated with current federal reading policy initiatives. (Contains 73 references.) (RS)

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CELA RESEARCH REPORT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING POLICY AND READING INSTRUCTION: A RECENT HISTORY

ANNE MCGILL-FRANZEN

CELA RESEARCH REPORT NUMBER 13004

NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER ON

ENGLISH LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING POLICY AND READING INSTRUCTION: A RECENT HISTORY

ANNE MCGILL-FRANZEN

National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement
University at Albany
State University of New York
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12222

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National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement
University at Albany, School of Education, B-9
1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222
http://cela.albany.edu/
518-442-5026

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN READING POLICY AND READING INSTRUCTION: A RECENT HISTORY

ANNE MCGILL-FRANZEN

The present is a time of unprecedented public and governmental interest in reading instruction, "more interest . . . than at any time in the last 20 years" (Hart, 1996; p. 600). Not only are policymakers and researchers at a critical point in time, but, Hart insists, "a golden opportunity is presenting itself for all of us – researchers and policymakers alike – to join forces and influence one of the most important educational policy debates to present itself in quite some time" (p. 601). For better or for worse, federal and state policymakers are scrutinizing reading education as rarely before. Further, such policy is intruding on the "core technology" of teaching and learning (Elmore, 1996; Cohen & Ball, 1997). In this report, I describe the recent policy history of reading education, its place on the public policy agenda, and relatedly, the research that relates reading policy to reading instruction. Although time periods and themes may overlap, I organized the report along a loose chronology of reading policy, with an emphasis on contemporary issues.

BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION

Early federal education policy had its roots in the social reforms of the 1960s. The first generation of educational reform had as its purpose equal educational opportunity for children of the poor. Part I of this report provides a brief recent history of federal education policy. In this section, I summarize what we know about the influence of federal policy on teaching and learning. Most often federal reading policy is associated with ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) Title I (or Chapter 1), but IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and earlier legislation establishing special education and the category of learning disabilities have profoundly affected the practice of reading education as well. The over-identification of learning disabled students with reading difficulties led to the National Institute of Child Health &

Human Development (NICHD) research agenda, one that now vies with that of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) and its National Educational Research and Development Centers for the attention of the U.S. Congress.

The second generation of educational reform was led by the states. Initially, states responded to the National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the famous "tide of mediocrity" rhetoric by mandating higher standards for teachers and students in unprecedented state policymaking activity, the "first wave" of reform (McLaughlin, 1992). In Part II, I revisit compensatory education (formerly Title I/Chapter 1) and describe systemic reform, the theoretical underpinning of current state education policy. I also review the effects of the so-called second wave of policy, that is, policy that deals with the harder issues of implementation and capacity building. Within this section I describe the effects of school organization on practice, with contrasting portraits of reading instruction in two restructured schools.

Part III emphasizes the research on implementation in Michigan, an early entrant into ambitious reading pedagogy and one whose implementation process has been carefully researched. I review the relation between school restructuring and reading instruction, in particular, whether changing school structures changes teaching and learning. Next, I describe the research on the non-monolithic character of policy responses by teachers and administrators. Even among teachers using the same materials and curriculum guides within the same district, there is profound variability in the quality of the tasks and discourse of instruction.

In Part IV I discuss the demise of constructivist reading policy in California. National attention to the crisis in California put literacy policy on the public agenda. I suggest an agenda setting process that culminated with current federal reading policy initiatives. Finally, I close with a brief summary.

PART I: THE FIRST GENERATION OF POLICY FOR PRACTICE – A FEDERAL ROLE TO ENSURE EQUITY

Until the mid-1960s, Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, the passage of Head Start, and the passage of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), there was little state

or federal involvement in education policy. Title I marked the federal government's first attempt to influence local practice, what McLaughlin called the "first generation" of education policy (1992). Title I distributed much money to local districts, based on the level of district poverty, to fund compensatory education programs – mostly in reading – that would supplement the regular classroom reading instruction of disadvantaged children. These first-generation policies were designed to more equitably redistribute educational opportunities, such as the opportunity to learn to read and attend preschool, and to compensate for the lack of resources in impoverished school communities. Title I funds were earmarked for particular categories of services, such as supplemental reading instruction, and oversight initially focused on ensuring that federal dollars were actually spent on services within these categories. Implicit in these regulations was the assumption that lack of resources, not lack of professional knowledge on the part of teachers, was holding back low-income children (McLaughlin, 1992).

Early evaluations of Title I showed marginal gains, if any, for participating children and demonstrated that policy alone, without local "will" and organizational capability, cannot bring about the intended change (McLaughlin, 1992; Timar, 1994; Kennedy, Birman & Demaline, 1986), in this case, sustained reading achievement for disadvantaged children. Besides these marginal effects on children's achievement, Title I brought about other changes, most notably an infrastructure at the state and local levels for program disbursement, development, and oversight. Thus Title I created a separate administrative bureaucracy and a supplemental, and also separate, program of instructional services (mostly reading) for low-income children who were behind in school.

By 1981 many members of both the executive and legislative branches had embarked on a campaign to decentralize federal functions, including education responsibilities. Under the Reagan administration and the New Federalism, many federal education programs were consolidated under block grants and given to the states to administer and support. Title I aid was reduced and barely maintained (and until 1994 was known as Chaper 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act, ECIA), even as poverty among children was increasing at an alarming rate. Title I funds were reduced under the assumption that state deregulation would lower the cost of oversight. Many provisions of Chapter 1 of ECIA remained the same, including the "supplement not supplant" requirement for reading services, and the emphasis on regulatory compliance rather than on the quality of the instructional services (Education Consolidation &

Improvement Act, 20 U.S.C. 2701-2891 1965, as amended 1981; Timar, 1994). Chapter 1/Title I was reauthorized in 1988, and again in 1994. I discuss these authorizations in a section that follows.

Special Education: An Underfunded Mandate

Responding to increasingly influential special education advocates, in 1976 Congress passed into law PL 94-142, thereby entitling disabled children to free and appropriate public education. Similar to the bureaucracy created by the passage of Title I, PL 94-142 established the institution of special education and a concomitant bureaucracy to administer programs and certify service providers. This legislation was significant for the field of reading education because PL 94-142 set up a new category of children with reading problems (McGill-Franzen, 1987). As in compensatory education, the majority of children in special education were referred because they were experiencing reading difficulties. Unlike children in compensatory education who were provided reading services to presumably help them catch up, struggling readers referred to special education were assumed to have an organic disability that impaired their ability to learn to read. Hence the label "learning disabled." (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1996).

Between 1976 and 1993, the number of children placed in special education skyrocketed and, overwhelmingly, the growth was attributed to children who were labeled learning disabled. By 1995, approximately 10 % of all school-aged children were classified as learning disabled (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1997), primarily because they could not read (Birman, 1981; Lyon, 1996). As funding for compensatory services in reading declined under ECIA and pressure for high standards and accountability for all students increased, as in the more recent waves of education policy, the demand for special education services continued to increase (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1991). Public accountability raised the stakes for low-performing schools, motivating the placement of low-performing students in special education, outside the accountability stream (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1992; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1993). Because the federal initiative for handicapped students was an underfunded mandate (it provided less than half of the cost of implementation), rising numbers of learning disabled students caused a substantive burden on the resources of local districts (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). The Center for

Special Education Finance (Chambers, Parrish, Lieberman & Wolman, 1998) estimated the 1995-96 special education expenditures to be approximately $32.6 billion, or about 128% more than the cost of regular education. A recent survey of local district expenditures indicated that the extra resources allocated to education during the last decade or so were spent almost exclusively on services for handicapped students, with few new resources allocated to improving the general education programs (Rothstein & Miles, 1995).

The high cost of special education and increasing demand for learning disability services for children with reading problems prompted a research agenda by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) funded by the federal government (Health Research Extension Act of 1985; Lyon, 1996). In order to identify research critical to the classification, causes and treatment of learning disabilities, NICHD in 1987 established the Learning Disability Research Network. This network promulgated the findings of major NICHD funded studies, which consistently demonstrated that disabled readers had deficits in phonological processing. Several of the studies indicated that the difference between struggling readers and disabled readers lay on a continuum from proficiency to disability, and that learning disabled readers were not qualitatively different from other readers experiencing difficulty (Lyon, 1996). Further, intervention studies, such as that conducted by Scanlon and Vellutino (1996), demonstrated that phonological deficits can be remediated in all but 1% of young children. When 1990s reading policy faltered in California, Lyon (1995; 1997) was ready with the major findings of the NICHD-sponsored studies of the etiology and treatment of children with reading difficulties.

PART II: THE SECOND GENERATION OF POLICY FOR PRACTICE – TOWARD EXCELLENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The period of time between 1980 and the present may be considered the "second generation of reform" (McLaughlin, 1992), which is marked by unprecedented education policy activity by the states. The federal presence in education policymaking waned somewhat during the 1980s, becoming more symbolic than substantive, as is suggested by the emergence of national commissions (e.g., National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; U.S. Department of Education, 1984). These commissions urged policymakers to establish accountability and

excellence within the educational system. States responded with higher standards for curriculum and materials, more rigorous certification requirements for teachers, and new testing programs. All states but Nebraska, for example, now administer tests at different grade levels, about a third require a test for graduation, and Texas is moving toward a test to pass from grade to grade (Greene, 1998).

The Governors took the lead in coordinating these state efforts; their work led to the Education Summit in 1989, the establishment of the National Education Goals by the Bush Administration, and the bipartisan support of the Goals 2000 Educate America Act in 1994. Three of the National Goals relate to literacy:[1]

- all children will start school ready to learn;
- all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English . . .; and
- every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The National Education Goals Panel then provided a framework for evaluating federal and state reading programs as well as redefining expectations for learning and achievement.

Compensatory Education Revisited

During this time period (1980 - the present), a number of empirical research studies described Title I, now Chapter 1, as traditional, basic skills instruction that was neither congruent with the new intellectually rigorous standards being promulgated nor related to children's achievement gains in the regular classroom (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Jenkins, Pious & Peterson, 1988). In 1988, Congress reauthorized Chapter 1, part of the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments, and changed the program in fundamental ways. No longer viewed as separate from the academic program of the regular classroom, Chapter 1 effectiveness was measured in terms of regular academic achievement. No longer targeting basic skills, Chapter 1 now emphasized mastery of advanced skills, and – rather than the "add on" program of the past – Chapter 1 resources could be used for school-wide

classroom improvement (Hawkins-Stafford Elementary & Secondary School Improvement Amendments, PL 206-297, 1988; Timar, 1994).

However, *Prospects: The Congressional Mandated Study of Educational Growth and Opportunity* (Puma, Karweit, Price, Ricciuti, Thompson & Vaden-Kiernan, 1997) found 1990s Chapter 1 programs did not look that different from descriptions of earlier evaluations. At this time, Chapter 1 served six million children each year in most elementary schools in the country and half of the secondary schools. With funding of about $7 billion, Chapter 1 served 25% of all first through third graders, about 20% of children in the middle grades, and between five to eight per cent of secondary students. Most Chapter 1 students were primary grade children receiving reading instruction. But unlike earlier, highly regulated Title I programs, local school districts had many options for spending Chapter 1 funds so that services could look very different from school to school, depending on local context and need.

Nonetheless, *Prospects* researchers found that Chapter 1 was a marginal intervention. Like earlier Title I programs, Chapter 1 instruction in the 1990s added only ten minutes of extra instructional time each day and typically consisted of pull-out instruction, often during reading and language arts instruction in the regular classroom. Half the staff hired with Chapter 1 funds were aides, not certified teachers, and these aides were most likely hired to work with students in push-in whole class instruction in high poverty schools. Instructional assistance was weak, the researchers concluded, compared to the level of need.

Regardless of the form of the intervention or the staff hired, Chapter 1 did not seem to influence student achievement, just as earlier studies had found (Rowan & Guthrie, 1989). The average achievement of all students in high-poverty schools was approximately the same as the achievement of Chapter 1 students in low-poverty schools. *Prospects* found that the program had not closed the gap in academic achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged students. In fact, "the observed lockstep pattern of student growth clearly demonstrated that where students started out relative to their classmates is where they ended up in later grades" (Puma et al., 1997, p. vi). The longer students received Chapter 1 services, the further they lagged behind their peers.

Nonetheless, unlike earlier longitudinal evaluations of Title I, the Prospects study found small school effects:

> Data from Prospects confirm the earlier findings by Coleman et al. (1966) that the characteristics of an individual student and his/her family account for the largest part of the overall variation in student achievement as measured by test scores. However, relatively smaller school factors do make an important contribution to student academic achievement and growth (Puma et al., 1997, p. vi).

Other studies confirmed that schools have made a difference in the educational achievement of students from poor communities. Even though the scores of minorities on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) are stable or in decline today, the achievement gap in reading between whites and minorities was reduced by one-third during the previous two decades, a time of increasing poverty for many families. This phenomenon has been attributed in part to federal educational interventions like Chapter 1 (Grissmer, Kirby, Berends & Williamson, 1994).

The 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), again Title I, substantively changed the program to make it more congruent with the national move toward excellence and accountability [Reinventing Chapter 1: The Current Chapter 1 Program and New Directions (U.S. Department of Education, 1993)] According to the provisions of IASA, Title I students were expected to achieve the same rigorous standards and participate in the same challenging curriculum as all other students. Keeping with its historic mission to provide opportunity to disadvantaged students, Title I was to allocate more resources to the neediest schools and to initiate more school-wide programs to improve curriculum and instruction in high-poverty schools. Finally, in recognition of the emerging research on teacher development and the central role of teachers in the success of any reform, Title I provided resources to support professional development so that Title I service providers could themselves learn how to make challenging curriculum accessible to a range of learners.

Policymakers and the constituents of Title I are now preparing for upcoming reauthorization hearings. At a recent invitational conference on Title I, for example, conference participants identified a lack of information on effective and innovative strategies for implementing challenging curriculum in high-poverty schools. The most pressing need identified by service-providers was opportunities for themselves to learn how to implement the Title I mandates for systemic reform (Wang, 1997; p. 16).

PART III: STATES TAKE THE POLICY INITIATIVE – AMBITIOUS TEACHING AND LEARNING

The early reforms requiring high standards for students and teachers have been called the "first wave" (of the second generation of reform), and as such, represent the "easy" reforms to implement (Kirst, 1990; McLaughlin, 1992). It is easier to count course requirements for teacher certification or student requirements for graduation than to ensure that ambitious teaching and learning is in place, for example. Nonetheless, requirements for teacher education and certification, curriculum requirements, textbook adoption, and assessment of student achievement certainly constitute powerful and popular policy structures (Cohen & Spillane, 1992). Such policies may guide classroom instruction and mediate the influence of any other policy. However, "instructional guidance" (p. 11) may be consistent or not across domains, prescriptive or not, and mandated or not, leading to recognition by some policymakers that top-down, systemic reform needed to be in place for substantive educational change to take place.

Systemic Reform

Although some local sites across the country reported successful reforms, few states had developed coherent educational policy in reading. In 1988, policy analysts Smith and O'Day promulgated the concept of "systemic reform." Smith, who had written extensively on effective schools in the early 1980s and who served as Under Secretary of Education in the Clinton Administration, was a believer that schools can make a difference and that government can and should intervene with a combination of mandates and incentives to promote education policy (Purkey & Smith, 1983; Vinovskis, 1996). Early, wide-ranging and ambitious initiatives by California and other states and the emerging research on teaching had convinced Smith and O'Day that top-down, state-wide curriculum frameworks aligned with assessments and teacher development were needed to effect substantive change:

> We did not expect to suggest these policy directions when we started reviewing the research literature on teachers and teaching. The rationale for a state curriculum framework which structures the knowledge needed by the teacher, the content of the schools' curriculum, and student assessment instruments grows out of the research on the

> importance of content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers (Smith & O'Day, 1988, in Vinovskis, 1996, p. 77).

Systemic reform holds that all children can achieve high academic standards, a new tenet of educational policy, and further, that schools must provide students with access to ambitious curriculum in the form of appropriate materials and effective teachers. That is, if students are to be held accountable for high standards of achievement, then they must have "opportunity to learn" (Vinovskis, 1996). Starting with the publication of the report, *A Time for Results* (National Governors' Association, 1986), and with input from the educational community, states began to talk about building local capacity to implement more rigorous curriculum and just what that might take (McLaughlin, 1992). What has been called the "second wave" of instructional policy thus deals with improving practice by developing teacher knowledge and enhancing teacher control of curriculum and instruction (McLaughlin, 1992). Policymakers looked to site-based management and alternative governance and organizational structures so that teachers would have more authority along with more responsibility for student learning.

School Structures and Practice

In the late 1980s the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) undertook a three-year study to look at the processes and effects of school restructuring (Elmore, Peterson & McCarthy, 1996). The basic premise of the school restructuring movement was that changing the organization of schools would improve the way teachers teach, providing support for more ambitious pedagogy and higher achievement on the part of students. CPRE researchers studied in depth the teachers in three restructured elementary schools, each with different structures to promote new ways of teaching, each at different stages of development and each experiencing varying success. I consider here the reading instruction of two of those teachers from two different schools, one teacher (and school) involved a few years with organizational and curricular change, and the other for over a decade; both schools were adequately supported in their efforts by the central administration.

Multi-Grade Classrooms, Teacher Teams, Cross-Age Single Classrooms, Professional Development: Do Organizational Structures Matter?

Mrs. Hancock was a member of a team of teachers who taught primary grade students in a school that was reorganized into multi-age units. One of her responsibilities was to teach reading to first through second graders. For the past two years, Mrs. Hancock had been teaching reading by using literature instead of the basal reading program. She did not group students by ability. Instead, each week she introduced three books (from which each child could choose) and she used activity sheets developed at the district's teacher center:

> In September, Hancock introduced three books in the "Miss Nelson" series. Each group had a different worksheet to accompany each book: One had a "detective map" consisting of features to be filled in such as characters . . . a second had an "activity sheet" of questions: "You are walking to school. Suddenly a dog runs up and pulls your lunchbox out of your hand. What would you do?"; and a third had a sheet to list characteristics of Miss Nelson (p. 121).

Before introducing a writing activity, Mrs. Hancock had the children guess a long /I/ mystery item hidden in a bag. She randomly selected a student to wear the puppet High Hat (from the High Hat program) while she read a story with long /I/. Next, she found the long /I/ vowel on a vowel finder chart and had children supply words with long /I/, which she wrote on the board and discussed with them. Hancock explained her instruction to the researchers as needing to do phonics:

> I have beginning readers and I also have second graders in there too, that I felt needed some extra work on phonics. We're really building hard on a phonics program for them, some word attack skills . . . It gives them something to work with, when they come to unfamiliar words, besides context clues (p. 123).

To a reading professional, it is clear that Mrs. Hancock probably did not know the subject matter of reading well enough to make a transition to teaching without the basal. As pointed out in the CPRE study, she tried to blend the old with the new and unsuccessfully adapted activities she had probably used in the past (p. 125). Rather than basing her practice on what children needed to learn, she seemed to depend on what she called a "teaching kit" for phonics unrelated to children's developmental levels, on story starters for writing, and on a selection of books that must have been too difficult for some and too easy for others.

By contrast, Mrs. Brezinski taught a self-contained classroom of fifth and sixth grade students in the most traditional of the restructured schools in the study. Each teacher there was responsible for a single cross-age class, an organization that the teachers ultimately selected because it was the most comfortable fit with their professional beliefs and pedagogy. Individual children were the focus of faculty meetings there, and Mrs. Brezinski kept a journal so that she could take notes and record her reflections on the learning of individual children, and in doing so, know them better. In the following example of part of a conversation between teacher and student, Mrs. Brezinski asks Chudney, a reluctant reader, what the quote (from Chudney's book), "She had to find herself, and she was still working on it," meant to her. Chudney responds, "She had to get away for awhile, and she had to fix herself. . . . I think she was in control of herself. She probably didn't yell at the kids, but she had to fix herself up. I think that is why she went away" (p. 174). Later, Mrs. Brezinski wrote in her journal:

> This is how Chudney translates or paraphrases "find herself" – reading into it her own understanding of the mother's behavior. She's also clear about the various relationships among characters and the sources of tension or dramatic conflict. . . . All this is very close to home as far as Chudney's own family relationships are concerned (p. 174).

In this case, the researchers argue, Mrs. Brezinski interpreted "learning in her class primarily through the lens of individual students'developing knowledge" (p. 180). What concerned Mrs. Brezinski was how much she should control what her students read. Should she allow students like Chudney to always choose books close to their experiences, or should she insist that they read, for example, *The Iliad*, because "myths like fairy tales are stories that have immense meaning and different meanings to different individuals. Reading them and knowing them is a way of putting that meaning inside your head so you can draw on it when you need to" (p. 183). Elmore et al. (1996) refer to this as the "constructivist dilemma" – how to bring expert knowledge to bear on children' learning without "displacing" the knowledge of children (p. 182).

Additionally, Mrs. Brezinski's school was affiliated with a well-regarded alternative school in Vermont, where she and her colleagues met with the Vermont faculty each summer to discuss students, subject matter concerns, and issues of constructivist pedagogy.

In spite of the substantive differences between Mrs. Hancock and Mrs. Brezinski in their knowledge of reading and reading development, all teachers and administrators in each of the schools studied actually were doing what policy had asked them to do – to change teaching by

changing school structures. They had initiated new grouping practices, more opportunities for professional development and team collaboration among teachers, more decentralized decision-making at schools (p. 236). What was the problem? CPRE researchers concluded that there is only a "weak, problematic, and indirect "relationship between changing school structures and changing teaching practice" (p. 237). A new kind of structure is unlikely to lead to particular teaching practices. Teachers interpret new policy or new ideas about teaching in terms of their own variable experiences. It is unlikely that creating multi-age structures, or cross-age classrooms or any other organizational change will transform practice. Rather, the researchers argue, it is just as likely that practice should change structure (p. 238). In order to transform teaching, they argue, first enhance the knowledge and skill of individual teachers, then ask what kind of structure will support their work (p. 240).

Participative Decision-Making and Practice: Does Governance Matter?

Besides changing the organization of classrooms, as in the CPRE study, policy can alter school governance, giving teachers more authority over the administration of school. Smylie, Lazarus and Brownlee-Conners (1996) studied the various ways teachers participated in school governance over a four-year period in a mid-sized urban district and found a relationship between certain kinds of teacher participation and gains in reading achievement. Using survey, observations and test score data, the researchers found that governance in schools reporting high and low teacher participation operated in fundamentally different ways. In governance councils with the highest participation, teachers studied curriculum and instruction issues, not just management issues. Within these high-participation councils, teachers' work was oriented toward instructional issues: teachers selected literature-based textbooks, developed alternative assessments, and integrated instructional units with language arts. Not only did teachers on these councils feel more pressure for accountability and report greater access to organizational learning opportunities, but students' reading achievement test scores improved significantly in these schools.

Teachers on councils with low participative decisionmaking, by contrast, were not focused on issues of academic content or instruction. The authors argue that participative governance

structures may have a negative influence on student outcomes if such governance is not well implemented, does not promote opportunities for professional development, and distracts teachers from their central mission of classroom instruction. Therefore, it is the type of decisions that involve teachers, not the process of participative decisionmaking itself, that has potential to improve classroom instruction.

Thus, even with higher standards, new school structures to accommodate new ways of teaching and learning, and materials, assessments and other top-down reforms in place, many analysts thought the reforms would be for naught without attention to teacher development and the local context within which policy is interpreted. Referred to as "the problem of the bottom over the top" (Elmore, 1983), this paradigm recognizes that teachers (and administrators) are more than a "conduit" for instructional policy (Darling-Hammond, 1990). "Teachers teach from what they know"; thus new policy must attend closely to the support of teacher knowledge through professional development. Policies "land on top of other policies" (p. 240), and teachers understand new policy in terms of their experiences with other policy, and within the context of their own knowledge, beliefs and teaching circumstances.

In the following sections, I present research on the implementation of reading policy in two states, Michigan and California. The unexpected effects of state reading policy in California put reading on the national policy agenda, and that story is preceded by the section on policy implementation in Michigan. The research that follows suggests the ways local contexts, especially the knowledge, beliefs and experiences of policy participants, shape state reading policy and its actualization in practice.

Michigan Redefines Reading but Local Contexts Transform State Policy

The state of Michigan was an early entrant into curriculum reform in reading. In 1985 the State Board of Education, under advisement from the Michigan Reading Association and a small group of university researchers, approved a new definition of reading:

> Reading is the process of constructing meaning through dynamic interaction among reader, the text, and the context of the reading situation (Michigan State Board of Education, 1985).

Because the revised definition differed substantively from the previous definition, which emphasized word recognition, this step represented a shift in state reading policy. The State Department of Education (SDE) formed a Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) of innovative practitioners, sponsored conferences to help educators learn the concepts behind the new definition of reading and strategies for practice, and designed materials for staff developers to use locally. Next, the SDE revised the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) to better align test items with the new definition of reading. The revised MEAP was administered in 1989 with the intention of "driving instruction," that is, as an inducement for teachers to change their practice in order to improve the test scores of their students.

Central Office Administrators Interpret Policy

Several policy analysts and researchers involved in the Educational Policy and Practice Study (EPPS), a longitudinal study of Michigan reading policy, followed its implementation at the local level. Spillane (1994; 1998) described how the state reading policy influenced the reading curriculum in two central Michigan school districts, one urban, one suburban, and conversely, how the central office and school level administrators' responses to the policy shaped the policy itself.

District office administrators in the suburban district revised curriculum guides, criteria for new textbooks, and report cards so that they were aligned with new state policy and allocated considerable resources for teacher development. In addition to promoting many of the main strategies of the reform, the district office included ideas, such as developmental education, that were not part of the state policy but important to central office staff, who were very involved with the Michigan Reading Association and National Association for the Education of Young Children. When later staff development was taken over by central office staff not originally involved, however, the focus of the training was much more narrow, reflecting the professional affiliations of this administrator with the Effective Schools Movement. Schools also responded differently, depending on the beliefs about reading instruction held by key staff. Where school administrators believed that decoding was as important as comprehension, the state reading policy was not supported to the same extent as in schools where administrators' beliefs were congruent

with state policy. For example, it was clear that not all schools had banned basal readers and workbooks, as directed by the central office. Instead, some combination of basal and literature was used in these schools because, in the words of one principal, "literature books don't have that same kind of controlled vocabulary" needed to increase sight vocabulary (Spillane, 1998, p. 46).

In the urban district, there was the same variable support for the state reading policy. Unlike the suburban district, however, administrative authority at the central office level was segmented into the subunits of elementary, assessment, staff development, and Chapter 1, each with responsibilities that did not overlap. The only subunit cognizant of the new state reading policy was Chapter 1, the unit charged with oversight of reading teachers in the district. Chapter 1 administrators were not only aware of the state reading policy, but they felt it was consistent with their professional beliefs, affiliations and experiences, as well as consistent with the 1988 reauthorization of Chapter 1, which was the source of funding for their program. Chapter 1 administrators fully supported the implementation of the state policy within the remedial reading program. The elementary division did not. They believed that the district-adopted basal reading program and the curriculum-referenced assessment that they used to monitor instruction were more suited to needs of an urban district than the instructional guidance offered by state reading policy. The staff development subunit was primarily associated with the Effective Schools Movement and geared the district's professional development toward that framework. The assessment division agreed with this view insofar as the two standardized tests administered by the district emphasized knowledge of discrete skills and comprehension of short passages over comprehension that was more interpretive. Even though the state assessment was aligned with the new definition of reading, the administrators overseeing the district assessment did not think that the MEAP provided them with valuable information.

Not all school level administrators, however, thought that the MEAP was irrelevant. Although most of the urban communities served by the district were not concerned about MEAP scores, one of the schools, located in a suburban community, was very concerned because the parents kept close track of the school's performance. Within this school, the administrators went out of their way to understand and implement the new state reading policy so that the students were prepared for the state test. Thus, neither the suburban nor urban districts responded in a "monolithic" way (Spillane, 1998). Individual beliefs, knowledge, and professional affiliations of

the administrators were the most important variables in how they implemented Michigan's reading policy.

Teachers Learn from Policy

Jennings (1996) examined implementation during the early years of Michigan reform from the teacher's perspective as a learner. She held that policy implementation had two facets – opportunities provided for teachers to learn about the policy, and what teachers actually learned from the opportunities presented. Based on interviews and classroom observations, Jennings constructed case studies of teacher learning, looking at where these teachers started in terms of their knowledge, beliefs and experiences, and what changed. She argued that, ultimately, policy implementation was "an incident of teaching and learning rather than a process by which ideas are filtered through the educational system and enacted by practitioners" (p. 109). Policy implementation was *teaching* within this view, and policymakers should do what good teachers do, and that is "provide multiple paths to get to the ideas" (p. 108).

In another study, Spillane and Jennings (1997) argued that tasks and discourse of instruction must change – not just materials and activities – in order to implement ambitious reading pedagogy. They defined task as the "questions and exercises students engage with" and discourse as the interaction between teacher and students around task (p. 460). As evidence for their view, the researchers closely analyzed the reading and writing instruction of a number of Michigan teachers. The district itself had developed coherent policy that aligned materials, curriculum and assessment. All teachers used literature to teach reading (no basal textbooks or practice workbooks were allowed); all teachers had students read and discuss novels or nonfiction. There was little variation in the materials or activities across teachers, yet the researchers found great variation in the opportunities to learn that these teachers offered students. Consider, for example, the following description of interaction in a fifth-grade reading lesson:

> Mrs. Camps' students were reading a biography of Paul Revere as their reading text. The class had been studying the Revolutionary War and Camps chose this book to connect reading and social studies. . . . Camps asked students another question on the study sheet she had given them, whether Paul Revere wanted to be put on trial for cowardliness or not. One boy argued that he would have wanted to so that he could clear his name. This discussion went on for a long time and students vehemently argued their positions. No

> students, though, used the text to support their arguments. After quite a long time, a girl – Shirley – said that she thought the question asked if Revere wanted to be put on a trail and she said no because the British would have followed him too easily. Camps responded, 'Now that's very interesting. That's one possible answer.' When the girl asked if she was correct, Mrs. Camps responded that she was because 'that's how you interpreted the question' (pp. 465-6).

As this vignette illustrates, coherent policy environment was not enough to improve Mrs. Camp's instruction. Top-down reading policy usually does not help teachers learn how to do it – how to get from policy to practice. External efforts to improve instruction, like aligned curriculum, materials and assessment, rarely can make a difference because they rarely get to the core of teaching and learning (Cohen & Ball, 1997; Elmore, 1996). As Cohen and Ball have argued, capacity to improve instruction resides in the "interactions among teachers and students around educational material" (p. 3), which comprise the tasks and discourse described in the work of Spillane and Jennings (1997).

Thus, beyond developing consistent reading policy, policymakers must find ways for policy to educate, not simply put policies into practice. Teachers need opportunities to learn from policy. But what they take from these opportunities depends also on what they bring to policy – their own knowledge and beliefs. The research on policy implementation in Michigan may help inform our understanding of the failure of California reading policy to promote ambitious pedagogy and curriculum.

PART IV: THE CALIFORNIA STORY – READING POLICY GONE AWRY?

Throughout the 1980s, California was out in front of educational reforms, leading the way with content-driven, systemic state education policy (Carlos & Kirst, 1997). Over a decade or so, California enacted a series of policies designed to change teaching and learning in California. The Senate in 1983 required the State Department of Education to develop model curriculum standards, established regional centers at universities to help teachers put the new standards into practice, established the California School Leadership Academy for administrators, and initiated changes in the state's assessment system from a focus on facts to a focus on application of knowledge (Chrispeels, 1997). In 1987 California adopted the English Language Arts Framework, which, consistent with the reform agenda of the time, emphasized the personal

meaning-making function of literacy and literature-based instruction in reading. To help build teacher capacity, the California Literature Project and other subject matter projects were founded and housed on university campuses for summer professional development for teachers, with school-year follow-up. These professional development activities emphasized "whole language" or constructivist approaches described in the English Language Arts Framework.

Longtime observer of professional development in California, Chrispeels (1997) longitudinally analyzed two dimensions of policymaking activity in California: Ten years of policy and policy implementation including mandates, inducements, capacity building policy and hortatory policy developed by legislators, curriculum and instruction experts, local and state leaders; and three years of local implementation by hundreds of participants in San Diego County. Within this analysis, policy inducements, such as textbook adoption, helped create a coherent, interrelated network of policies. Textbook adoption criteria were aligned with the frameworks, inducing schools to select from the state approved list in order to receive state funding for textbook purchase.

In 1989, the Senate passed the California Learning Assessment System (CLAS), an assessment and accountability system to be aligned with the curriculum frameworks. The involvement of teachers in the piloting and scoring of CLAS, as well as the involvement of the Literature Project and local school improvement programs, helped build local capacity and high levels of teacher satisfaction with the frameworks. Teachers in San Diego Unified, for example, as reported in the K-8 English Language Arts Evaluation Report, said that they routinely used "literature-based curriculum, variation in grouping, and open-ended questioning" and "endorsed the philosophy of integrating language arts through core literature and teaching vocabulary and writing in context" (Finley, Forest, Ferrer & Dozier, 1994, in Chrispeels, 1997, p. 463). Even after CLAS had been eliminated, 87% of the district's K-8 teachers said that they had incorporated CLAS-like instruction and assessment into their classroom program (Finley et al., 1994, in Chrispeels, 1997), demonstrating, Chrispeels suggested, that local educators could sustain the direction of the state language arts policy even without state leadership. After state politicians shifted against CLAS, local educators continued to implement alternative assessments, Chrispeels argued, because they had developed the capacity to do so.

State policy adopted over the course of 10 years constituted a coherent policy system in literacy with a variety of policy instruments. As local educators interpreted and implemented the

policies, they were themselves constructing their own policies and capacity to sustain them. As is known from the CPRE and EPPS studies of reading policy implementation in Michigan (Spillane & Jennings, 1997; Elmore, Peterson & McCarthy, 1996), however, the policies teachers construct may bear little resemblance to those intended by the state.

Cohen and Ball (1997) suggested that the new California state curriculum frameworks were enacted in an isolated and typically superficial way. Unlike teachers in Chrispeels' San Diego study, only a minority of teachers in California had the opportunity to coordinate professional development with curriculum and assessment, and curriculum and assessment with teaching and learning. At least in math, teachers who did so had students with higher math achievement test scores. So, outside of teachers who participated in professional development (like that described by Chrispeels, 1997), few teachers had opportunities to deepen their knowledge of subject matter or work with the new materials or learn more about student response and capability (Cohen & Ball, 1997).

By 1995, new reading "policy texts" emerged in California, using the same variety of policy instruments to induce change in reading instruction, but in a different direction (Chrispeels, 1997; Carlos & Kirst, 1997). When NAEP results revealed that California children were last in the nation in reading achievement in 1992, and then again in 1994, the English Language Arts Framework, in particular, and "whole language" in general were blamed. According to NAEP, 87% of the teachers in California indicated that they had used the new approaches. California's newly developed state assessment, CLAS, supposedly aligned with the new curriculum frameworks, showed a similarly dismal performance in reading in 1994.

In the view of some observers of California's education policy, systemic curriculum reform had indeed changed reading instruction, but the reform itself was flawed (Carlos & Kirst, 1997). The chronic low test scores and accompanying media attention prompted an inquiry by state officials that led to the dismantling of California's state reading policy and the initiation of another.

Policy analysts Carlos and Kirst (1997) provided the following detailed story of California's shifting reading policy in the 1990s. After the media attention following the release of the 1994 NAEP scores, the California legislature, with the Governor's support, passed sweeping legislation "aimed at literacy and basic instruction, unprecedented in the history of the state" (p. 9) called ABC bills because of their intent to restore traditional instruction in reading and the

last names of their sponsors Assemblymen Apert, Burton, and Conroy. Assembly Bill 170 required that instructional materials be based on the "fundamental skills" including "systematic, explicit phonics, spelling . . ." (p. 13), whereas Assembly Bill 1504 required that the materials be "reflective of current and confirmed research" (p. 14). During the following legislative session, after eight hours of public hearings on reading pedagogy and practice in which the professional literacy associations squared off with advocates of NICHD research on the importance of "phonics," the Assembly passed three bills (Assembly Bills 3482, 3075, and 1178) to authorize K-3 instructional materials and teacher training to implement the revised state reading policy. In the aftermath of the NAEP reading scores, the head of NICHD, who had been floating that research program for years, suddenly had an audience. In addition, research on the importance of the phonological component of learning to read had been steadily accumulating (Adams, 1990; Juel, 1994; Share & Stanovich, 1995), and these studies were finally getting the attention of policymakers and the media.

During that same session, the Senate passed legislation to support class size reduction in grades K-3 from 30 students to 20 in service of reading improvement and authorized the use of Goals 2000 funds to educate teachers in the basic reading and phonics instruction proposed by the state. In contrast to previous lean times of state support for education, substantive resources were allocated to reduce class size, train teachers and improve reading practice.

Also in 1995, the legislature established the Commission for the Establishment of Academic Content and Performance Standards, an advisory board appointed by the governor and legislature (and including the state superintendent), to oversee the development of new curriculum standards and an aligned assessment. In 1998 the state adopted the new Reading/Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks, a document that explicitly lays out what students are expected to know and be able to do grade by grade. Unlike the broad approach taken in the 1987 Framework, which expected teachers to be able to fill in the details, the 1998 Framework is more similar to the California Department of Education (CDE) documents of the 1970s and 80s in both form and content.

The California Reading Association (CRA) criticized the document for presenting reading as a "series of hierarchical tasks with an emphasis on one focused delivery system. . . . [I]t reflects strong bias toward direct instruction . . . and decoding as the exclusive means by which students are taught. . . . Little emphasis is placed on reading aloud, partner reading, independent silent reading . . . shared and guided reading (Schulz, 1998, p. 2). The International Reading

Association sharply denounced the framework for "imposing a deficit or special education model on every student in California" (Board of Directors, IRA, 1998, p. 3).

In the aftermath of the state reading policy shift, Carlos and Krist noted that the CDE lost ground in the conflict over reading policy, having been criticized for putting into place policies that were "experimental" and without a basis in research. The research to which the analysts refer is that of the NICHD. Recently, policy analysts at the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement noted that much of the research conducted under the auspices of NICHD is not adequate to support the reading policy recommendations often put forward by the director of that agency (Allington & Woodside-Jiron, 1998).

Policy analysts hold that the 1990s intervention by the legislature into curriculum policy represented a break from the past. Top-down curriculum policy by elected officials, as in the reform of reading instruction, was unusual in the history of California's schools. Carlos and Krist attributed much of the responsibility for the policy shift in reading, and activity by the legislature, to the press, particularly the education reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, who widely reported on declining test scores and the activities of parent coalitions that objected to what they called "outrageous" state policy.

Not only has the California legislature transformed state reading curriculum in California from a constructivist perspective to an emphasis on traditional teaching and basic curriculum, but by mid-1996 eighteen so-called "phonics" bills had been introduced into eleven other state legislatures (Paterson, 1998). These bills mandate a type of "back to the basic" methodology that their sponsors claim is backed by research – the NICHD research program.

PART V: CURRENT ISSUES – EARLY LITERACY ON THE POLICY AGENDA

How the California transformation happened is the subject of some discussion (See Smith, Levin & Cianci, 1997; Allington & Woodside-Jiron, 1998; Elliot, 1996; Hart, 1996; Taylor, 1998). The literature on agenda setting (Kingdon, 1984; McGill-Franzen, 1993) suggests that for issues to reach the "decision" stage (that is, when the government takes action on them), several things have to happen. The issue needs to be defined as a problem that government should address and labeled in a way that the public will support. Researchers often "soften-up" the

policy process by floating their ideas long before the issue is perceived as a problem, so that policymakers are more likely to be receptive to their solutions. Policy action depends on the convergence of a feasible solution to a pressing problem and the right political climate, creating an open window for an issue whose "time has come." Clearly, the perceived crisis in California, precipitated by the low NAEP test scores, created the sense of a pressing literacy problem that needed the attention of government. The NICHD research program had been around for years (Sweet, 1997) as had the research on phonemic awareness. Once the window opened for potential solutions to California's literacy crisis, the policy entrepreneurs – advocates, researchers, publishers, bureaucrats, et al – were ready.

Bitter debate continues over whether the state curriculum frameworks caused the decline in reading test scores as well as over whether the reading achievement of California youngsters did in fact decline. (See, for example, *The Literacy Crisis: False Claims, Real Solutions*, McQuillan, 1998). The policy shift in California was transformed into a national policy debate on how to teach children to read, what proportion of the school population cannot read (and how this is defined), and what research is.

The National Policy Agenda: NAEP Scores

President Clinton himself kept literacy an important policy issue in his 1996 campaign. As Clinton and other policymakers have pointed out, 40% of American fourth graders scored below the "basic" level on the 1994 NAEP reading assessment. Clinton's goal – declared from the bully pulpit – is that all fourth grade children be able to read at the basic level; to this end, he established the volunteer tutoring program, America Reads. In 1997, with Republican control of Congress, Clinton made America Reads the centerpiece of his education program and one of the first examples of policymaking through a public campaign to develop awareness and mobilize support (Smith, Levin & Cianci, 1997).

As most policymakers know, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) developed a new framework for assessing reading, beginning in 1992. Instead of strictly multiple choice items, NAEP changed its format to keep in step with the move toward more ambitious teaching and learning. The 1992 NAEP reading test included the dimension of reader's purpose

(e.g. reading for literary response, information, to perform a task) as well as the dimensions of measuring depth of understanding, using authentic texts, and extended responses (initial understanding, interpretation, personal reflection and critical stance) (Elliot, 1996). To say that 40% of children read below a basic level on the NAEP is not to say that they can not read in absolute terms but, rather, that they may not be able to read well enough to participate fully in the technological society of tomorrow (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998).

Research-Based Reading Pedagogy: What Counts as Research? What Counts as Reading?

Not only did the polemic surrounding beginning reading take over the education profession in California, but nationally as well (Taylor, 1998). The apparent lack of consensus on research-based reading curriculum and pedagogy prompted the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to ask the National Academy of Sciences to establish a committee to determine how reading difficulties can be prevented. The purpose of this committee was to synthesize the empirical research base on early literacy and present recommendations in a format accessible to parents, educators, publishers, and policymakers. The National Research Council's Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children issued its report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, in 1998 (Snow, Burns & Griffin). It confirmed that reading ability is "determined by many factors":

> [M]any factors that correlate with reading fail to explain it; many experiences contribute to reading development without being prerequisite to it; and although there are many prerequisites, none by itself is considered sufficient (p. 3).

The report identified reading for meaning and comprehension strategies as being essential to reading development as well as understanding the nature of the alphabetic system, spelling-sound relationships, and the "structure" of spoken words. Further, the report claims that all children experiencing difficulty – even children with learning disabilities – need the same high quality instruction but more intensive support. In addition, the report recognized preschool education as an untapped resource for the development of literacy. The Joint Policy Statement of the International Reading Association and National Association for the Education of Young

Children, issued in1998, affirms the commitment of these professional organizations to educate early childhood teachers about their responsibility to promote literacy development.

In order to build on the findings by the NRC, Congress requested that NICHD establish a National Reading Panel, in consultation with the Secretary of Education. The National Reading Panel was to review the research literature, including the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching children to read; to determine whether there can be classroom application of these findings; to develop a strategy for disseminating the findings; and to identify gaps in the research on reading instruction.

In 1998, both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives considered a literacy bill that narrowly defined the research base for teacher development and provided for limited use of vouchers for reading tutors. The Reading Excellence Act (REA), sponsored by Rep. Goodling, Chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee, passed the House but died a week before its self-imposed deadline as the Senate declined to act on it and recessed without approving a compromise bill (Sack, 1998). The $210 million (and perhaps an additional $260 million from Clinton's 1999 request for literacy) that was allocated to support reading initiatives under the REA bill then reverted to special education state grants, a goal that some Republicans in Congress had all along – to find some money for this underfunded mandate. Some policy observers embraced the REA while others opposed it. Carnine and Meeder of the National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators (NCITE), for example, had argued in the media that the REA was exactly what teachers needed to get back on track (1997). On the other hand, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) adamantly opposed the bill and worked to defeat its passage (Sack, 1998). What the NCTE opposed – control of reading pedagogy – the proponents of the bill applauded, believing that the NICHD research program had "proven" that direct instruction was the appropriate methodology. As Cohen and Barnes (1994) have pointed out, education policy is most often didactic itself but not often educative.

Ultimately, in the fall of 1998, Congress passed a revised Reading Excellence Act (REA), hailed by the Secretary of Education as "the most significant law on child literacy passed by Congress in more than 30 years" (U.S. Department of Education, 1998, p. 1). By mid-1999, Congress had awarded over $230 million dollars to 17 states to support professional development for teachers, transition programs for kindergartners, family literacy, and tutoring for struggling learners. The International Reading Association (IRA), representing over 300,000

reading professionals, responded positively to some aspects of the new version (1998). The IRA was pleased with the national emphasis on literacy instruction. Nonetheless, the IRA felt that the total allocation of funds was not enough to make a difference at the local level. Further, the association expressed concern with the grant approval process, noting that it could diminish local control of education. IRA stated that the approval process was cumbersome, too dependent on government agencies, and vulnerable to voucher proposals.

Summary and Conclusions

Over the brief history of reading education policy that I have presented here, it is clear that problems were framed in different ways at different points in time. For example, Title I, originally framed as an issue of insufficient resources, became an issue of regulation and compliance, and finally, it has been transformed into an issue of teaching and learning. The knowledge required of teachers today is complex, encompassing not only subject matter knowledge or curriculum expertise, but knowledge of children's development and the interactional competence to support children's learning and emerging control of their own literacy. But can policy facilitate this learning?

Instructional capacity, as Cohen and Ball (1997) remind us, is the interaction of teachers with students around educational materials, and policy rarely targets all three components. What teachers do with curriculum, of course, influences what students learn, and teachers' knowledge of both content and development shapes the discourse of instruction. However, as implementation research in Michigan and California illustrated, educational policy does not tell teachers how to translate standards or assessments into instruction, often leading to superficial enactments of the intended policy (Spillane & Jennings, 1997; Cohen & Ball, 1997; see also Miller, 1995; Miller, Hayes & Atkinson, 1997; Bridge, 1993; and Winograd, Petrosko, Compton-Hall & Cantrell, 1997 for implementation research in other states).

It does not help that state reading policy shifts, as in California, have created unstable contexts for teaching and learning and contributed to teacher cynicism about reform efforts (Cohen & Ball, 1997). Nonetheless, media attention to low performance on NAEP, the perception of rapidly increasing numbers of children with reading difficulties, the increased costs

associated with their education, and the promotion of the NICHD research agenda have made literacy a national priority.

The recent NRC report on preventing reading difficulties (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998), as well as the small amount of research on implementation and instruction, emphasized substantive teacher development in the core technology of teaching and learning. As a California educator told a researcher from the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement, "Teachers are independent and you cannot tell them how to think and feel. Because if you don't believe in a program whatever it happens to be, I can tell you whatever I want [but] it's not going to happen. Because when you go in that classroom and you close that door, you're going to teach what you feel and believe is right and what you feel and believe you can do." (McGill-Franzen, Woodside-Jiron, Machado & Veltema, 1998). To paraphrase policy analyst McLaughlin (1992), teaching may be too complicated, too embedded in context and too tied to individual beliefs and knowledge for policy to have a predictable and consistent effect. That is not to say that policy has no effect, because it does, but it does so as one of myriad influences that make up the context of teaching and learning.

ENDNOTE

[1] Emerson Elliot (1996) noted that two National Goals related directly to literacy. I added the first goal to Elliot's two goals.

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